

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 048058
ORIGIN EUR-08

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /009 R

66011

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EUR/RPM:BCLARK

-----016496 242016Z /43

R 240630Z FEB 78

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

INFO ALL NATO CAPITALS

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 048058

LIMDIS

FOL ROME 3126 SENT ACTION SECSTATE FEB 17, 1978 REPEATED TO
YOU QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 3126

LIMDIS

FROM VATICAN OFFICE

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: MNUC, NATO, NPG, NL, VT

SUBJECT: THE VATICAN AND THE N-BOMB

1. VATICAN FOREIGN MINISTER CASAROLI CONFIRMED TO US FEBRUARY 16
THAT THE POPE HAD RECEIVED LETTERS FROM BREZHNEV AND FROM THE
RUSSIAN ORTHODOX PATRIARCH SUGGESTING THAT THE POPE CONDEMN THE
DEVELOPMENT OF THE N-BOMB, BUT THAT THE POPE HAD NOT YET MADE
A WRITTEN REPLY. HE SAID THAT HE UNDERSTOOD THAT THE EC-NINE COUN-
TRIES HAD DECIDED TO REPLY SEPARATELY, IMPLYING THAT THE VATICAN
WAS FOLLOWING VERY CLOSELY THE SUBJECT. IN TELLING US THAT, HE
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PAGE 02 STATE 048058

IS DRAFTING THE REPLIES AND IN EXPRESSING APPRECIATION FOR VICE
PRESIDENT MONDALE'S PRESENTATION ON THE ISSUE ON JANUARY 26
AND OUR OWN PRESENTATION OF JANUARY 9 (ROME 0513), HE DID NOT
CONVEY IMPRESSION THAT HE WAS ABOUT TO RECOMMEND THAT THE POPE
CONDEMN THE N-BOMB SPECIFICALLY EITHER IN THE LETTERS OR PUBLICLY.

2. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH WE DO NOT DETECT ANY CHANGE IN

CASAROLI'S PREVIOUS INCLINATION FOR AVOIDING SPECIFIC CONDEMNATION, IF THERE SHOULD DEVELOP A CHORUS OF CONDEMNATION (ALONG LINES OF THE RECENT NETHERLANDS' COUNCIL OF CHURCHES UNANIMOUS DECISION TO CONDEMN THE N-BOMB, REPORTED IN THE HAGUE 785), THE PRESSURE ON THE VATICAN TO BREAK ITS SILENCE WOULD BE INCREASED. WE HOPE, THEREFORE, THAT THIS OFFICE WILL BE KEPT INFORMED OF DEVELOPMENTS ON THE ISSUE AND OF ANY FURTHER REPRESENTATIONS THE U.S. MAKES TO ALLIED AND NEUTRAL COUNTRIES. GARDNER UNQUOTE VANCE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DIPLOMATIC COMMUNICATIONS, ADVANCED WEAPONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 24 feb 1978
Decaption Date: 20 Mar 2014
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978STATE048058
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: EUR/WE:BMCKINLEY
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X1
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780086-0761
Format: TEL
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780215/aaaaamjt.tel
Line Count: 72
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: c6b638d0-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ORIGIN EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 27 jul 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3483218
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: THE VATICAN AND THE N-BOMB
TAGS: MNUC, NL, VT, US, UR, NATO, NPG
To: NATO POSTS
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/c6b638d0-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014